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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Wednesday, September 4, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "MEALS FOR THE WOMAN WHO DINES ALONE." Approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Homemakers, I have here a letter from one who signs herself, "The Forgotten Woman."

Forgotten, she means, in the sense that I never -- well, hardly ever -- give her a thought when it comes to planning meals. She is the young woman who lives alone, and usually eats alone. She works six days a week, and hasn't much time to spend planning meals, or much money to spend for food.

But let me quote from her letter: "I have many friends in the same fix that I am," she writes. "The other day, when I happened to be staying home, I heard one of your food talks, and I just wondered whether you might have some good ideas for us. Of course we know in general what foods we should eat -- like plenty of salads, and milk -- but how can we tell whether we're getting the proper amount of each kind of food?"

Well, when I answered this letter yesterday, I told the "Forgotten Woman" that the scientific way to tell whether you're getting the right amount of each kind of food is to count the calories, the calories required from each kind of food.

Now just a minute, homemakers. If you're like me, you want to make a dash for the door every time you hear anybody say "count the calories." Maybe you have friends who make a fetish of calories, and spoil every luncheon by insisting on counting them -- right there in public.

That's not my idea of a good time, so let's forget about the scientific way of telling whether you're getting the right amount of each kind of food -- and take a short cut. Before I tell you about the short cut, let's review the foods we all need to keep us in good health. Here's a general plan: Every day, at least one serving of meat, fish, egg, or cheese; two vegetables -- and be sure that one is a green and leafy vegetable, and don't always let potatoes be the other one. Then, every day, at least one raw fruit or vegetable. Milk, a glass or two, or in cooked dishes if you prefer. Cereals, bread, sugar, and of course some butter and other fat. Follow this general plan, and you can find out whether you're getting enough, by watching your weight.

Watch your weight, and you can tell whether you're getting the right amount of each kind of food. Low-cost diets run high in fattening foods, because they're cheap. However, to maintain good health, we need plenty of the other, usually more expensive foods, to balance the cheaper and more fattening ones.

If your weight is normal for your height and build and age, try to keep that weight. If you find it running fifteen or twenty pounds more than normal, especially if you are getting on to middle age, cut down on the fattening foods, such as bread, cereals, potatoes, fats, and sugars. Use more fruits and green or yellow vegetables. If you are under weight, eat more of the fattening foods -- but don't leave out the others.

Now the problem is how to get the most food value for your money. Let's start with breakfast. Don't trust to coffee and toast alone to last you half a day. Women who work hard need a good breakfast, food with "staying" qualities, like milk and cereal. If you can have an egg with your bread or toast, so much the better, for eggs have many kinds of food value.

Whole-grain cereals are usually more nutritious than others, and oat-meal is usually the cheapest of these unless you can get whole wheat and cook it whole or ground. If you don't care for milk to drink, cool the cereal with milk, or make cocoa with it, or use hot milk in your coffee -- cafe-au-lait, in the French manner. The coffee has no food value but the milk has, so you get food and stimulant too. If you can have fruit for breakfast, so much the better; otherwise, try to have it some other time during the day.

For lunch, if you carry it with you, have sandwiches with such nutritious fillings as meat, cheese, peanut butter, chopped carrots and cottage cheese, egg, baked beans, or nuts and dates. Drink milk or butter-milk and add a fruit if you can -- an apple, a banana, berries, melon, peaches, grapes.

If you go to a cafeteria for lunch or dinner, you may like to select something on toast, so you won't need to buy bread in addition. Cheese toast is nourishing, or Welsh rabbit. Baked beans, or dried beans and peas cooked in any other way, are also good selections. And don't forget about the green leafy vegetables and tomatoes, as well as other foods.

Macaroni or spaghetti or rice, cooked with cheese and tomatoes, amounts to a full meal in one dish. Another good lunch from the cafeteria is bread, cabbage or greens, and a piece of fruit pie. Still another is a milk soup or bean soup with plenty of bread and fruit or raw vegetable salad. A stew or a chowder is a good inexpensive dish for dinner, especially if it contains meat or fish and two or three vegetables. That's a whole meal, with bread and butter. Of course, a fruit, or some kind of greens, is a desirable addition.

Most of us need to guard against choosing too many starchy things. They're cheap, they're filling, and they seem to give us a lot for our money. But they should be balanced by other kinds of foods -- green vegetables, tomatoes, or fruit.

Today I've given you some of the food facts we should all remember, whether we eat alone, or with the family. Tomorrow we'll discuss "Meals for the Two-Person Family."

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